

Sarah Michie Smith, December 10, 1826, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JACKSON'S MARRIAGE: SWORN STATEMENT OF MRS. SALLY SMITH.

Near Nashville, December 10, 1826.

The statement of Mrs Smith widow of Genl Daniel Smith formerly the representative of Tennessee in the Senate of the U states.¹

¹ See vol. I., p. 7.

As well as I now recollect Mr Smith and myself settled in this country in the year 1784. At that period, or shortly after it Mrs Donelson and family were among the few families who came and settled in the country on the south side of Cumberland river, where, altho they were but a few miles from me, yet, in consequence of the river running between us, and the danger of visiting in those days, I did not become personally acquainted with them for two or three years after. The family however was universally spoken of as one of the most respectable and worthy in the whole county. The first time that I ever saw Mrs Jackson, then Mrs Roberts, was at the station of Col Mansker. One of her Brothers had not long before brought her from Kentucky, where she and Mr Roberts had been married and settled—the cause of her return to Tennessee, was then attributed to the cruel and unjust treatment of her husband who was spoken of every where as a man of irregular habits, and much given to jealous suspicions.

About 2 years after I first saw Mrs Roberts, I learned that Roberts had arrived in the country, and by the assistance of the family of his wife that their differences had been reconciled, and that they were again living together at Mrs Donelson's. They were not long

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however together, before it was understood that the same unhappy apprehensions seized the mind of Roberts, and the consequence of which was another separation, and as it soon appeared, a final one. All the circumstances attending this rupture I cannot attempt to state with much particularity at this late day. But it is hardly possible, considering the free and unreserved intercourse that prevailed among all the respectable classes of people here at that time, that an incident of this nature should occur without being fully and generally known; and that every person should concur in the same views upon its character, without the best reasons. In this transaction Mr. Roberts alone was censured; and I never heard a respectable man or woman intimate that the conduct of his wife differed from that of the most prudent, and virtuous female. Genl Jackson boarded at the time in the house of Mrs Donelson, and it was the common belief that his character and standing, added to his engaging and sprightly manners, were enough to inflame the mind of poor Roberts addicted as he was to vicious habits and the most childish suspicions.

Mr Roberts had not been long gone from Tennessee when information was received here that he had obtained a divorce from his wife. Whether this information came by letter or by a newspaper from Virginia addressed to my Husband, I cannot now say with certainty, but I think by the latter. It was after this information came that Genl Jackson married Mrs Roberts, and I recollect well the observation of the Revd Mr Craighead in relation to the marriage—it was that it was a happy change for Mrs Roberts, and highly creditable to Genl Jackson who by this act of his life evinced his own magnanimity as well as the purity and innocence of Mrs Roberts. And such was the sentiment of all my acquaintances. Since this period I have lived within a few miles of Mrs Jackson, and have never been acquainted with a lady more exemplary in her deportment, or one to whom a greater share of the respect and regard of friends and acquaintances can be awarded.

Given at my plantation in Sumner County State of Tennessee, on the 10th day of December, 1826

Done in the presence of Daniel S Donelson, as witness my hand and signature.

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Daniel S Donelson [Seal]